

Moreover, the Emperor's violent edicts against the Arians, and the banishment of Eusebius and Theognis, all indicated a settled and rooted conviction which nothing could shake, while the death of the Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria and the election of Athanasius in his stead ^ must have strengthened enormously the Catholic party in Egypt and, indeed, throughout the East. Alexander had died within a few months of his return from Nicaea, in the early part of 326. He is said, when on his death-bed, to have foretold the elevation of Athanasius and the trials which lay before him. He had called for Athanasius—who at the moment was away from Egypt—and another Athanasius, who was present in the room, answered for the absent one. The dying man, however, was not deceived and said: "Athanasius, you think you have escaped, but you will not; you cannot." We need not recount the stones which the malignity of his enemies invented in order to cast discredit upon Athanasius* election- There is no reason to doubt either its validity or its overwhelming popularity in Alexandria, where, while the Egyptian bishops were in session, the Catholics outside the building kept up the unceasing cry: "Give us Athanasius, the good, the holy, the ascetic." The election was not unanimous. Evidently some thought the situation required a conciliatory demeanour towards the beaten Arians. But that was not the view of the majority, who, by choosing Athanasius, set the best fighting man on their side upon the throne of St. Mark. They